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TOP SECRET

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GENERAL

1. Soviet official discounts war as alternative--US Ambassador Kirk in Moscow transmits from a "reliable source" an account of a conversation between Trygve Lie, Secretary-General of the UN, and Arkady Sobolev, an official of the Soviet Foreign Office, on the subject of increasing US-Soviet tensions, during which Lie asked point blank if the USSR was headed for war. According to the account, Sobolev replied he did not foresee war as an alternative because the USSR considers the outcome "too uncertain and too dangerous." Kirk comments that even though Sobolev, in view of his previous relationship with Lie, might be expected to speak more freely on this occasion, he probably is not "sufficiently cognizant" of Politburo views to lend "major importance" to his statement. (Sobolev was Assistant Secretary-General of the UN from 1946 to April 1949.)
2. Views on defection of Czechoslovak UN delegate--According to US Embassy Belgrade, the Yugoslav Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs considers the defection of Czechoslovak UN delegate Houdek of "tremendous importance" because Houdek is an old line Marxist who had never belonged to the "halfway collaboration" school of Benes and Masaryk. The Yugoslav official reportedly feels confident that the Czechoslovak Government and other Satellites will find it increasingly difficult to find suitable candidates for overseas posts. Embassy Belgrade expresses the view that the treatment Houdek receives in the US will have material bearing on the "general question of Titoism" and points out that those inclined toward Titoism would be greatly discouraged if Houdek is not given the status of a political refugee.

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NO CHANGE in Class. ☐

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